

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system comprising:

at least one reseller's electronic site, each such site arranged to display information pertaining to products that are selectable by a user, said products provided to said reseller from a source independent from said reseller;

at least one database controlled by said independent source, said database arranged to contain information specific to said source's products that are displayable to said user via said reseller's electronic site; and

at least one communication link controlled jointly by said source and said reseller, the link responsive to a request for updated data and for accessing said database to provide the latest version of the requested data to a database controlled by said reseller.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein said source-controlled database can communicate to a plurality of databases, each controlled by a different reseller.

3. The system of claim 1 further comprising means for causing the distribution of product data to a plurality of reseller's electronic sites, such that the product data will be uniformly displayed to an accessing user regardless of which one of said plurality of reseller's electronic sites said user accesses.

4. The system of claim 1 further comprising:

at least one second communication link established from said source database to an accessing user at a reseller's electronic site such that said accessing user may receive certain data directly from said source database while said accessing user remains in communication with said reseller's electronic site, said second communication link independent from said first-mentioned communication link.

5. The system of claim 1 further including:

means at said reseller's electronic site for receiving provided versions of the requested data and for using said provided data to directly populate already established electronic pages at said reseller's electronic site.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein said communication links extend to a plurality of reseller sites.

7. The system of claim 6 wherein each of said plurality of reseller sites includes:

means for using data provided over said communication links from said source database to directly populate already existing electronic pages such that the data that is provided from said source database is uniformly displayed to a user regardless of which of said reseller's electronic sites said user accesses.

8. A method for updating a plurality of reseller electronic sites from a source location; said method comprising the steps of:

    updating a database at said source location with information pertaining to a plurality of products; and

    delivering, from time to time, said updated information from said database to said reseller sites; and

    using, at each said reseller site, the data as delivered from said source to directly populate electronic pages established on said reseller's electronic site.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the time of delivery of said delivery step is controlled by a requesting reseller electronic site.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein said directly populating step is operable to establish uniformity at all said reseller electronic sites.

11. The method of claim 8 further including the steps at said reseller site of:

    (a) establishing a transactional relationship between a user and said reseller;

    (b) receiving from said user a specific request; and

    (c) communicating said user's request to said source; and

said method further including the steps at said source of:

    (a) receiving user requests from said resellers; and

    (b) directly fulfilling each said request from said source to said user while still maintaining said established transactional relationship.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said direct fulfillment includes the step of :

providing one of specification sheets, content, physical delivery; and

wherein said maintained transactional relationship controls of payment between said user and said reseller.

13. The method of claim 11 wherein said system maintains the traditional channel relationships between said source, said reseller and said users.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein said source location provides leads to said reseller based on received ones of said user requests.

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15. A system comprising:

at least one reseller's electronic site, each such site arranged to display to an accessing user at said reseller's electronic site information pertaining to products selectable by said accessing user, said products provided to said reseller from a source independent from said reseller;

at least one database controlled by said source, said database arranged to contain information specific to said source's products that are displayable to said accessing user via said reseller's electronic site; and

a communications link controlled at least in part by said reseller and responsive to a request for certain information from said accessing user for accessing said database to provide the latest version of said requested information directly from said database to said accessing user while still maintaining an active electronic communication link between said accessing user and said reseller.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein said certain information is an electronic version of a user specified product, said product being specified in a transaction between said user and said reseller.

17. The system of claim 15 further including:

communication links controlled at least in part by a plurality of resellers and responsive to a request for certain information from an accessing user at any of said resellers for providing said accessing user with requested data while still maintaining the connection from said user to the reseller selected by said user.

18. A method for controlling data presentation to users who access a selected one of a plurality of reseller electronic sites; said method comprising the steps of:

maintaining a source location database with information pertaining to a plurality of products; and

from time to time, on request of a particular one of said reseller sites, delivering a requested portion of said information from said database to an identified user then connected electronically to said reseller's electronic site, said information delivered over a link identified by said reseller at a time when said user remains connected to said reseller's site.

19. The method of claim 18 further including the steps of:

accepting a purchase order for a user selected product under control of said source location;

controlling the delivery of said product to said user by said source location; and

concurrently while said order is being accepted by said source location maintaining a commercial relationship between said user and the reseller to which said user is then electronically connected.

20. The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of providing statistical data for each said reseller pertaining only to users who were serviced by said source location under control of said reseller.